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CAROLINA COUNTRY

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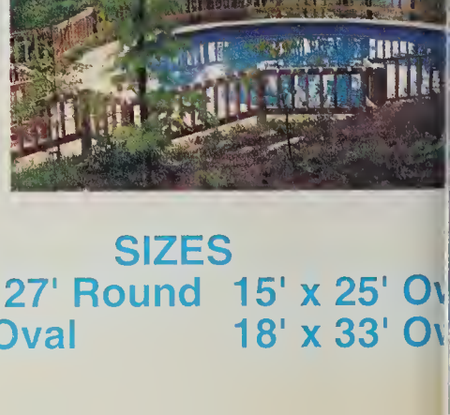

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CAROLINA COUNTRY

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The nation's electric co-ops do far more than provide power. Sharon O'Malley of the co-ops' national association describes some of the other services they offer to boost rural America.

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Feature 6
The "storm of the century" wallops much of North Carolina, causing deaths and widespread destruction. Most of the state's electric co-ops were forced to meet the storm face to face, as their work crews braved the elements to restore service.

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Co-op leaders across the country are taking issue with President Clinton's plan to cut the federal subsidy on rural electrification loans.

Feature 22
America's co-ops are reaching a major crossroads as the competition stiffens for all utilities. Tar Heel co-op leaders discussed the issues, elected new officers and handed out various awards at a recent statewide meeting.

State Supt. of Public Instruction Bob Etheridge addresses co-op leaders. Page 22

Hank's Gardening Guide 26
With the spring-to-summer transition moving into full swing, gardeners must be alert for the best planting opportunities.

Journal 28
Readers give "thumbs up" reviews on three varieties of apples, and an Anson County man invents a simple device to keep snakes and squirrels out of birdhouses.

On the Cover
Kevin W. Chelko of Huntersville was ready to put his camera to work when this lovely butterfly lingered on a flower in a Watauga County field. Chelko is a consumer-member of Crescent Electric Membership Corporation, Statesville.

Our View

Quietly and without fanfare

Co-ops do more than keep the lights on

By Sharon O'Malley

Whenever I hear somebody say the job of rural electric cooperatives is done, I wonder if they know what these co-ops do.

Sure, the 1,000 consumer-owned co-ops successfully brought electricity—lights and heat and the convenience of electric appliances—to rural America in the 1930s and 1940s.

And they keep lights on and homes warm today.

But there's more.

The cooperatives help create jobs in their communities. Aside from hiring people to work at the utility, co-ops help entice new companies to move into their areas and help existing companies expand, sometimes with the aid of government loans.

Co-ops help rural people find medical care. There's a dearth of doctors, nurses and hospitals in the most desolate rural communities. So some co-ops organize community health fairs that offer cholesterol and cancer screenings—possibly the only ones their rural customers will ever get. Others actively work with medical professionals to improve the doctor-to-patient ratio.

Sharon O'Malley

Rural electric systems have brought water and sewer service to otherwise unserved rural areas. They offer satellite television—and with it, a world of communications—to customers who live far from the reach of cable companies. Their employees and volunteers raise money for their rural neighbors who lose their homes and possessions in fires and hurricanes. They help where help is needed.

Once a year, employees and officials from co-ops around the country gather for a national meeting to adopt resolutions that will guide the actions of their national association. This year, more than 10,000 people attended such a gathering in Dallas.

They talked about ways to finance the construction of utility lines. They considered the best ways to comply with federal regulations. They debated the value of new technology, and they learned about new electrical research.

Yet a quarter of the resolutions those co-op delegates adopted had nothing to do with utility technology or financing. They had to do with:

- Improving the lives of rural people.
- Getting no-interest loans for rural companies that would offer jobs to unemployed co-op members.
- Changing the health care system so that low-income or underserved rural people can afford and find good doctors.
- Bringing state-of-the-art satellite TV to rural people who want to know what city viewers know.
- Making sure that rural disaster victims are cared for, by the government and by their neighbors.

This is what rural electric cooperatives do. Keeping the lights on is only a part of the story.

It's a story that doesn't make it onto prime-time TV shows or into President Clinton's speeches because, in the rural tradition, it's done quietly and without much fanfare.

But it's being done, in a process that didn't end when all the farmhouses got electricity. Rural electric cooperatives have too much to do to consider themselves done.

Sharon O'Malley is manager of statewide publications for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

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Feature

Electric co-ops were the first to respond

Face to face with the "storm of the century"

By Michael E.C. Gery
Associate Editor

In the west they called it "the blizzard of '93," and on the coast they called it a "winter hurricane." Never mind that it blew into North Carolina only a week before spring began.

The monster storm arrived Friday afternoon, March 12, with little warning and without a name. And it brought heavy snow and high winds that quickly spread disaster conditions across almost half the state.

While no one seems certain whether it was the worst in 100 years, it was commonly called "the storm of the century."

Meteorologist Phil Badgett with the National Weather Service in Raleigh said the storm did break records across the state: in Asheville, 19 inches of snow fell in 24 hours; in Randolph County, the barometric pressure of 28.62 inches was the lowest on record; in Brunswick County, wind gusts were recorded at more than 100 miles per hour.

Gov. James B. Hunt declared 40 counties as disaster areas. The storm caused at least 19 deaths.

Aside from the numbers, however, were the tests of fortitude that many North Carolinians endured as a result of the storm—either as its victims or as angels of mercy offering help to the victims.

As in any weather crisis, utilities were among the first to confront the storm as they dispatched workmen to restore interrupted service for those who depend on it. They joined emergency responders, both inside offices and out in the raw elements, coming face to face with the storm and its destruction.

The response involved coordinating the schedules, locations and projects of line crews, trucks and their equipment. Co-ops that were able to quickly restore their members' power dispatched crews to co-op territories still under duress.

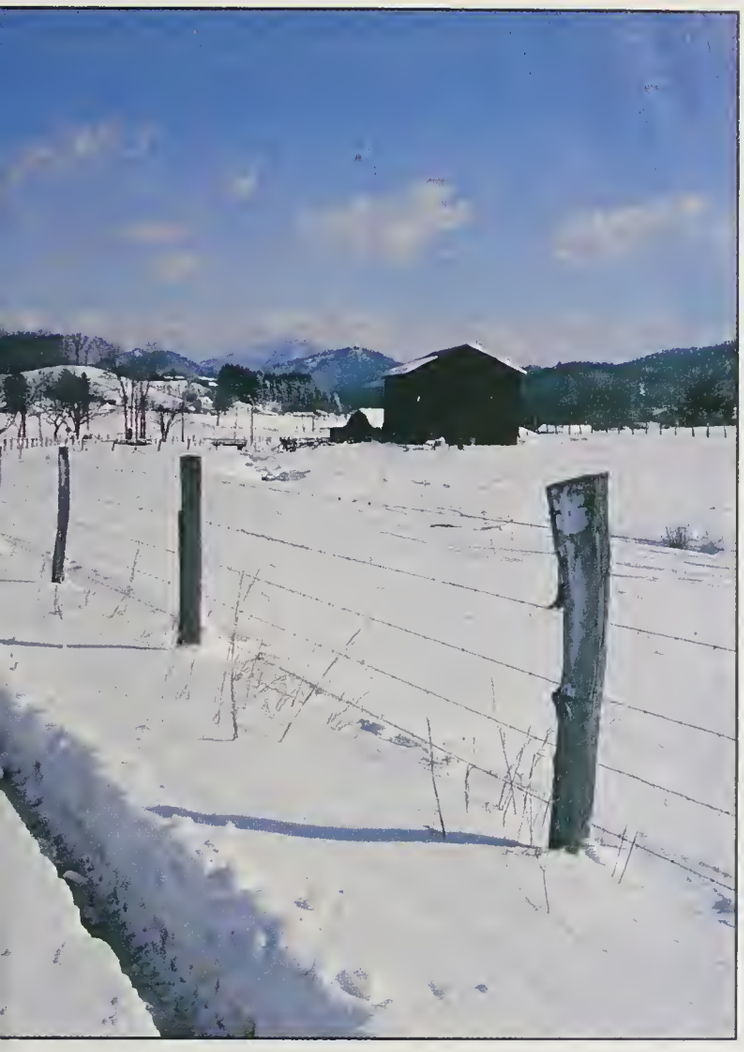
In the west, crews maneuvering through snowdrifts 10 and 13 feet high were further frustrated Sunday as temperatures dropped into the single digits. On the coast, crews cut through massive trees that blocked roads and felled power lines, then waded through flooded ditches to reach poles and service drops.

The Mountains

"I'm 46 years old, and I've lived here all my life," said Charles R. Tolley, manager of French Broad Electric Membership Corporation, Marshall, in the craggy western mountains and deep hollows. "I've never seen anything like this storm."

Almost 16,000 of the co-op's 25,000 members were without power after the storm hit late Friday. Some two feet of snow fell and drifted to 35 feet in mountain passes. Service trucks were frozen in snow for hours.

In Watauga County, Kenneth Teague, a mechanic with Blue Ridge



Jon Serenius

Once the storm passed, it was a pretty sight in Haywood County.

Electric Membership Corporation (EMC), Lenoir, ventured out Saturday morning to take tire chains to the co-op vehicles. He finished up at West Jefferson and was in Deep Gap on his way to Boone when he got a call from the county's emergency officials asking if he would drive his one-ton truck on a rescue mission to Parkway Elementary five miles from Deep Gap. Motorists were stranded in high drifts along Highway 421, as they tried to take shelter at the school.

The emergency management crews needed help getting people to the shelters. They knew Teague's location, his truck and his ability. Several stranded people had been found near death in the area as they ran car engines to keep warm. About 200 people were stranded in a 6-mile stretch of Highway 421, where drifts as high as 15 feet immobilized their cars.

On his way through the mountains, Teague picked up an Appalachian State University student who was stranded by the roadside. The student offered to help, and Teague loaned him a pair of insulated overalls. They found six families gathered at the post office, all unable to move their vehicles.

One by one, Teague removed and towed the cars over the mountain far enough to allow them to continue by themselves.

Between Deep Gap and Boone, Teague and the student covered only a single mile in four hours, battling blowing snow, pulling vehicles from snowdrifts, including one National Guard truck. Finally at 2:30 a.m., having rescued all they could in that vicinity, Teague and his helper slept in the truck, only to rise at 4:30 and go out again.

In all, Teague pulled about 40 vehicles from packed snow.

To keep at it, he said, "I thought about my family, and how appreciative I would be to have someone help us. That kept me going, plus adrenaline, and the Good Lord."

Meanwhile, Blue Ridge EMC lineman Ben Hurley, at the height of the blizzard, trailed a snowplow for four hours out Highway 421 to restore service at the home of a critically ill 90-year-old woman.

In Haywood and Transylvania counties, linemen with Haywood EMC, pushed snow with their truck headlights to reach service lines. When the trucks got stuck, they got out and tromped through the snow.

"Sometimes we were walking waist-deep in snow carrying about 40 pounds of equipment," Lee Gaddis told The Mountaineer newspaper. He figured the worst of it was working in unceasing and bitter cold wind in the community of Rabbit-skin.

"Being in the timber during that wind, stuff was falling down all around us," he said.

Haywood's president Roy Stamey credited the co-op's right-of-way clearing program for having already cleared most of the threatening trees and limbs.

Stamey issued a public thank-you to the employees and members of the co-op. He said members gave food and warm shelter to the outside crews and plowed their way to the Waynesville and Lake Toxaway offices to bring food and encouragement to the staffs inside throughout the weekend.

The Foothills

In Burke and Rutherford counties, Gary A. Whitener, manager of Rutherford EMC, Forest City, said the cost of restoring power to some 15,000 members was about $1.25 million.

"I've never experienced anything like this," he said.

He reported that in the Lake Lure area, a Rutherford EMC crew

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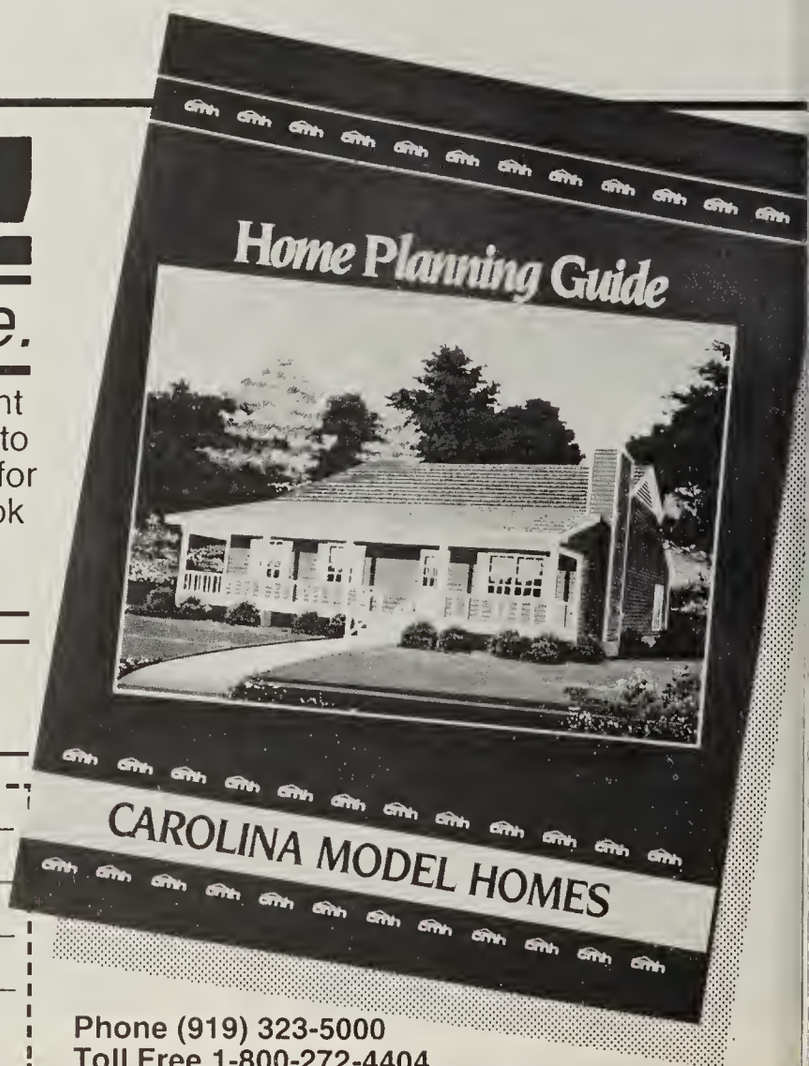

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shoveled through a right-of-way and 4-foot drifts to clear a road so a pregnant woman could get to the hospital on time.

"We're real proud of the way we helped the stork," Whitener said. "Maybe she'll name the baby 'Rutherford!'"

Davidson EMC, Lexington, at one point coordinated 150 people in the field, including contracted crews and those from other co-ops, to restore service. The hardest-hit areas were in Stokes and Rockingham counties, where snowdrifts and icy conditions made Sunday's work slow and tedious.

"What we are proudest of is how prepared and ready to go we were," said H. Wayne Wilkins, executive vice president. "We learned from the tornadoes of a few years ago, and then Hurricane Hugo, to prepare for the worst and be ready to respond to whatever kind of storm it may be."

"We were the first utility to have everyone returned to full power," said Davidson's marketing manager Mark Shults. "Duke Power and the municipal systems, for example, have to get the cities restored first. So people who live in a rural area have an advantage in a situation like this. If you are served by a co-op, our only priority is to get *your* power back on when it goes out."

East of Davidson County, in Randolph, Montgomery and Moore counties, residents received a half-foot of snow and sustained, cold winds. Dave Rowe, manager of public relations for Randolph EMC, Asheboro, said the EMC drivers were "like Yankees" in their skill at moving through snowdrifts. He said the co-op's tightly-disciplined emergency response plan "worked real fine" in smoothly coordinating power restoration activities.

"And we didn't need any milk, eggs or bread, either," Rowe said.

E.L. "Mac" McCarty, Randolph's office automation manager, has the emergency plan in the co-op's computer system, so a range of information about outages can be analyzed and printed to help in responding.

"A lady called at one point after the outage began and demanded to be put on Duke Power immediately," Rowe said. "Well, we had her power back on in three hours. Duke customers were still without power three days later."

Pitt and Greene EMC, Farmville, sustained more than $50,000 in damages to its system, said Manager Mark A. Suggs, but still freed a crew to help nearby Tideland EMC. A grateful Tideland member called Suggs personally to thank the co-op for helping neighbors in need.

Joe Ward

Blue Ridge EMC crews pulled out vehicles and trudged through deep snow.

The Coast

Coastal communities were battered by a hurricane-force storm usually not seen in late winter.

Meteorologist Phil Badgett said the winds were that strong but the storm wasn't a named hurricane because it was not caused by tropical air, warm waters and low pressure. It was "a freak storm which took on freak names," he said, such as "winter hurricane." Cold Arctic air mixed with an extremely low-pressure system in the Gulf of Mexico moving north and east, and the condition was replaced rapidly by high

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atmospheric pressure, said Badgett.

"We do get storms of almost that magnitude in late March, early April," he said, recalling the Ash Wednesday northeaster of 1962.

Most of the southeast North Carolina coast was slammed. The storm moved up Pamlico Sound and through northeast North Carolina into the Virginia Tidewater, churning the usually flat waters of the Intracoastal Waterway and vast sounds into seas of six-foot waves.

By Sunday, seaside communities looked like broad landfills, with pieces of roof, fencing and outdoor structures strewn over beaches, roads and yards.

On the island of Sunset Beach in Brunswick County, the controversial landmark pontoon bridge was closed Saturday, leaving more than 100 cars unable to cross to the mainland during the storm. The bridge was closed by the state because it becomes unsafe in winds over 30 mph.

"People sat over there all that time running their engines for heat and running out of gas," Sunset Beach's mayor told a local newspaper.

Winds howled from 12:30 to 9:30 p.m. until the bridge was allowed to swing open again. It was a "dry blow" in Brunswick County, causing more salt damage than water damage.

At Brunswick EMC, Shallotte, about 90 percent of the service area of about 45,000 members was blacked out at one point. And even when power was restored, salt accumulation on the lines and equipment threatened more outages, as the saltwater mixed with freshwater rain, forming a conductor that causes electric current to arc and jump circuits.

The remote coastal communities on Harkers Island, Ocracoke and Hatteras Island suffered similar beatings from high winds and beach erosion.

As office staff handled phones throughout the storm, Harkers Island EMC line crews worked through Saturday night and into Sunday to return power to the island.

Frank Lloyd

Blown salt coated this circuit breaker in Newport and burned it, causing $115,000 in damages.

The co-op's Patsy Gaskill said mainland customers of Carolina Power & Light called the EMC office Saturday night in an effort to learn the status of the utility systems. They couldn't get through to CP&L.

A high tide swirled around the island but spared the residents any devastating floods. Windblown salt spray coated everything on Harkers Island after the storm, "burning brown" the pine tree needles, azalea bushes and other plants, Gaskill said.

Later, grateful members wrote to the EMC staff, addressing each by name.

As areas north and south were still without electric service on Sunday, Joy Birch felt proud, noticing that power was restored to her place by the time church concluded.

"I appreciate the way you keep our system in good working order," Birch told the Harkers Island EMC staff. "I have never thanked you for the long hours you must give in emergencies; for often working in the cold and wet; even, I am sure, for sometimes putting your lives on the line. ...

Tideland EMC restored service to flooded Stumpy Point.

It has made me acutely aware of how much you contribute to my life. I'm glad you are part of my community."

Doug and Beverly Johnson told Harkers Island EMC, "*Our* electricity is worth every penny!"

A group of Harkers Islanders treated the co-op employees to a shrimp dinner the following week.

Philip Morgan

From the Oak Island bridge, Don Hughes, district manager of Southport-Oak Island, Brunswick EMC, examines trees burned brown by salt in the 12-hour "dry blow."

More than 12,000 members of Tideland EMC, Pantego, were without power for much of the weekend—from Minnesott Beach to Scuppernong in Pamlico, Beaufort, Hyde and mainland Dare counties. Some 150 trees in already soggy ground were uprooted and blew down across Highway 264 in eastern Hyde County.

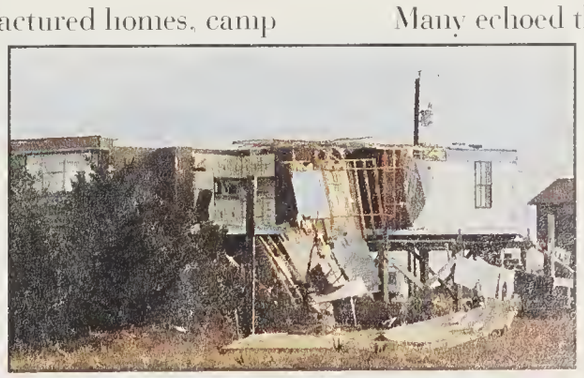
As the storm approached, a Tideland EMC crew was dispatched to the home of a blind man in the Grantsboro area to help start his standby generator. Soon, electric line service to the man's house went out and stayed out for 36 hours.

A Tideland lineman was injured while repairing a line. Although the member reported no power, nothing was said about the home's connection with a neighbor's emergency generator. The lineman was released from the hospital after two days of treatment, said Heidi Smith, Tideland's member services specialist.

Other Tideland employees worked under duress through the weekend, Smith said. One man's father returned home from the hospital after an extended stay and died while his son worked through the storm's aftermath.

Most members of Albemarle EMC, Hertford, in Pasquotank and Perquimans counties lost power through Sunday afternoon, reported co-op manager Dorris B. White. High, incessant wind ripped tin roofs from many farm buildings, sending them flying into power lines.

Gov. Hunt arrived in an Army helicopter Monday to inspect damage on Hatteras Island and Stumpy Point. Manufactured homes, camp trailers, satellite TV dishes and fishing boats were tossed onto banks and into roadways by advancing seas. Soundside houses were flooded. Amusement parks looked like mangled toys.



Michael E.C. Grey

Damage at Rodanthe on Hatteras Island.

Carolina Electric Cooperatives' generating plants at Buxton and Ocracoke Island were brought on-line to help provide power during the emergency, and staff from the state office pitched in to help make repairs on the Cape Hatteras EMC, Buxton, system.

Meanwhile, Cape Hatteras linemen and Tideland crews worked alongside telephone and emergency workers to restore service to battered homes and families. Many residents along the Pamlico Sound moved their belongings to higher ground and watched raging seas crash in one side of their house and flow out the other for several hours Saturday night.

With the helicopters, National Guard relief vehicles and personnel moving about during the days after the blow, coastal areas resembled a war zone.

Working through a nerve-wracking weekend, trudging through the elements to cover some of the state's most heavily ravaged terrain, employees of Carolina Electric Cooperatives demonstrated once again that service and safety come first, even in "the storm of the century."

At least some of the co-ops' members noticed and offered them a pat on the back and a word of thanks.

Many echoed the sentiments of Ann Rose of Harkers Island, who told her EMC's employees: "Nature was at its worst, and you all were at your best."

Carolina Electric Cooperatives staffers Owen Bishop, Dan Cook, Jane Pritchard and Kim Whorton contributed to this story.

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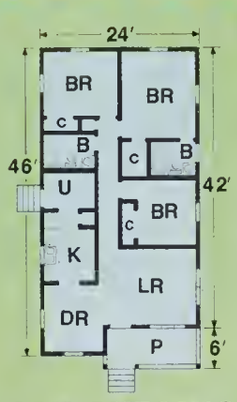

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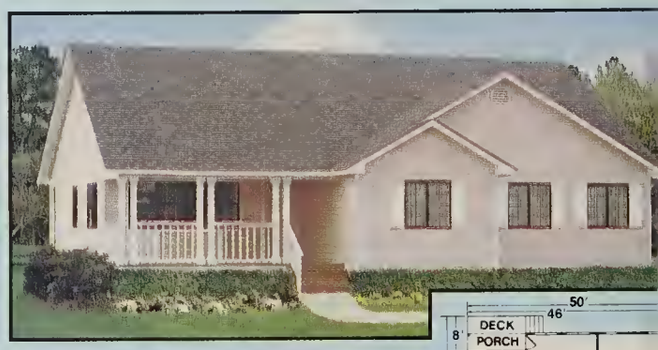

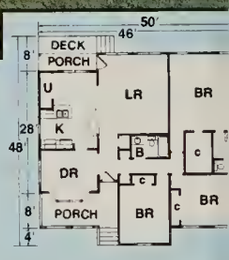

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Focus

Wanted: Late Ag Census forms, grant proposals and discarded golf clubs.

Census of Agriculture seeks forms for 1992

Questionnaires from the 1992 Census of Agriculture are being accepted at the U.S. Census Bureau even though the deadline for returning them has passed, according to Fred Gatlin at the Census Bureau.

Even persons who are no longer in agriculture are asked to return the forms so that the Census Bureau can update its records.

For more information about the Census of Agriculture, call (800) 233-6132.

Mini-grants program launched for rural schools

The fifth annual Rural Electric Cooperative Mini-Grants Program is now accepting proposals from any K-12 classroom teacher whose school is within a community served by a rural electric co-op.

Six grants, $250 each, will be awarded to the schools that meet criteria for their projects. They must involve some aspect of the science of energy, such as the history of hydroelectricity in the community, the role of rural electric co-ops to rural America and the nation, or alternative energy sources for the next generation. The deadline for the proposals is June 15.

The Mini-Grants Program is co-sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and the National Rural Education Association (NREA), which also administers the program. The final report of the project should be in the form of an article so that it can appear in "Country Teacher," a quarterly publication for rural teachers.

NRECA is the Washington, D.C.-based service organization that represents the nation's 1,000 nonprofit consumer-owned rural electric cooperatives, which provide electric service to more than 25 million people in 46 states. NREA is the national association that represents rural educators and works to assure adequate resources for rural districts.

For guidelines and details on the program, contact Meghan Jordan at NRECA, 1800 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; Phone: 202/857-9543; Fax: 202/857-9791.

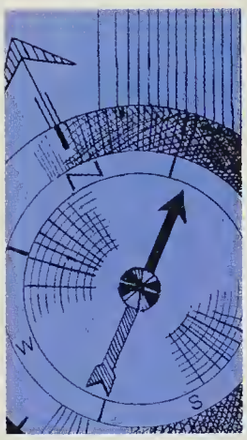
Community college needs golf clubs

What do you do with unwanted golf clubs? Students at Brunswick Community College could make good use of them.

The college's program in Recreational Grounds Management Technology will soon offer a course in grounds management in which each student will need golf clubs, bags and other gear. Donations of usable equipment will relieve students from the expense of purchasing it.

Donations may be tax deductible. For information, contact Deborah Kelso at Brunswick Community College, P.O. Box 30, Supply N.C. 28462. Phone: (919) 754-6900, ext.365.

Here, There and Everywhere



From seafood in Engelhard to Scottish Tartans in Franklin.

Engelhard festival

May 15. Engelhard. Hyde County.

Miss Seafood Festival Pageant. Little Miss and Mr. Seafood Festival Pageant. class reunions. seafood industry demonstrations. historical displays. entertainment. smorgasbord of local seafood. Contact: Roy and Anna Clarke. Route 1. Box 87A. Engelhard. N.C. 27824.

Turkey recipe contest

June 1 deadline.

North Carolina Poultry Federation offers $1,900 in prize money. Recipes must include at least a pound of fresh or cooked turkey meat and should serve four to eight people. Contact N.C. Turkey Cooking Contest. 4020 Barrett Drive. Suite 102. Raleigh. N.C. 27609. Phone: (919) 783-8218.

Silver settings

Through Sept. 5. Mint Museum of Art. Charlotte.

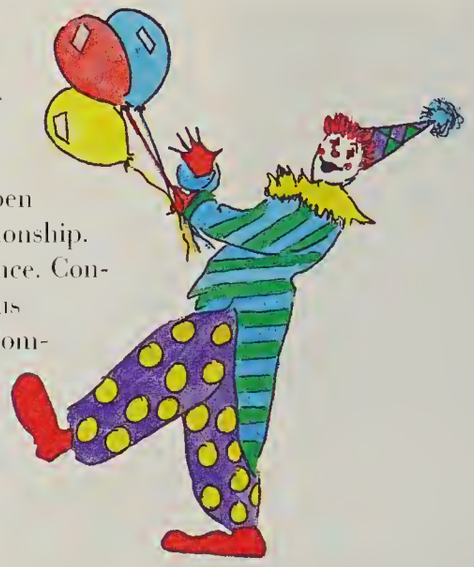
Late 19th century silver and silverplate objects. Contact: Phil Busher. 2730 Randolph Rd.. Charlotte. N.C. 28207. Phone: (704) 337-2009.

This 1880 nut bowl is in the Mint Museum exhibit from the Derby Silver Company.

Share Cabarrus Festival

May 15. Concord.

Games. jumping bag. air walk. clowns. face painting. mimes and puppets. arts and crafts booths. N.C. Open Gold Panning Championship. art displays. street dance. Contact: Concord-Cabarrus County Chamber of Commerce. P.O. Box 1029. Concord. N.C. 28026-1029. Phone: (704) 782-4111.



"Roanoke Decoded"

May 13-16. Roanoke Island.

Talks on the first English settlement in America. Indian society. archaeological discoveries and the outdoor drama. "The Lost Colony." Plus films. musical and dramatic performances and a special accredited program for educators. Reservations required. Contact: Bebe Woody. Fort Raleigh Historic Site. Route 1. Box 675. Manteo. N.C. 27954. Phone: (919) 473-2111.

Artsplosure in Raleigh

May 17-23. Raleigh.

Spring Jazz and Art Festival with exhibits of local. regional and national artists and artisans and evening programs. Contact: Artsplosure. 300/200 Parham St.. Raleigh. N.C. 27601. Phone: (919) 831-6221.

Gold panning contest

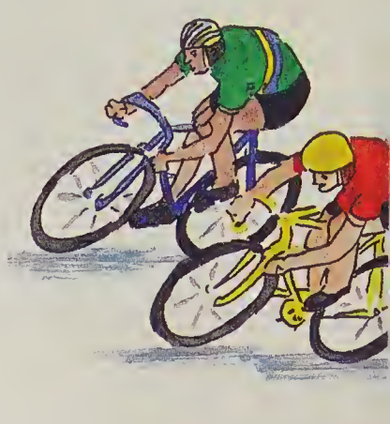
May 15. Concord.

Fourth annual North Carolina Open Gold Panning Championship at the Share Cabarrus Festival. Speed panning competitions for adults and children. For entry forms. contact: Reed Gold Mine State Historic Site. 9621 Reed Mine Road. Stanfield. N.C. 28163. Phone: (704) 786-8337.

Nocturne Criterium race

May 14 at 6:30 p.m.. Concord.

Bicycle racing licensed by the U.S. Cycling Federation. Contact: Jim O'Brien. The Right Gear. 117 Cloverleaf Plaza. Concord. N.C. 28025. Phone: (704) 786-2453.



UNC summer seminars

Session begins June 28. Chapel Hill.

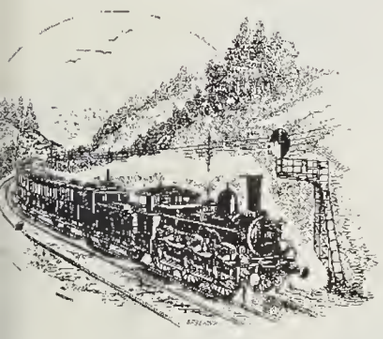
Cultural. moral and social topics examined from the perspective of the humanities at the University of North Carolina. Tuition is $140 for

three-day seminars and $240 for week-long seminars. Contact: Humanities Program. CB# 3425. UNC-CH. Chapel Hill. N.C. 27599-3425. Phone: (919) 962-1544.

Trains, dollhouses, toys

June 26-27. Metrolina Expo. Charlotte.

Operating train layouts. dollhouse displays. toy trains. miniatures. railroadiana. and collectibles. Contact: Greenberg Shows. Inc., 7566 Main Street. Sykesville. Md. 21784. Phone: (410) 795-7447.



New River banks party

May 30. Onslow County.

Traditional banks party at the historic Pelletier House and Wantland Spring on the banks of the New River. Bluegrass music. traditional craft demonstrations. fish stew. and tours of the house. Contact: Onslow County Museum. P.O. Box 384. Richlands. N.C. 28574. Phone: (919) 324-5008.

Old mill crank-up

May 15-16. Lee County.

Northwest Volunteer Fire Department's Old Mill Crank-Up at the old mill on Highway 42. Pottery making. basket weaving. wood carving. soap making. quilting. old-fashioned whiskey still. plus vintage engines and farm tractors. Contact: Kenton Patterson at (919) 774-4742.

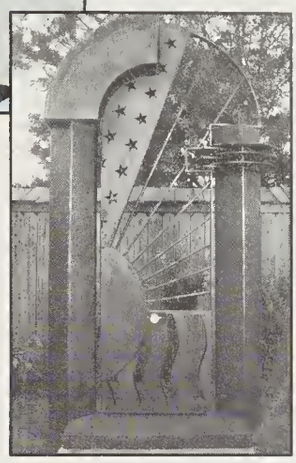
Pasquotank RiverSpree

May 28-30. Elizabeth City.

The annual RiverSpree celebration of life on the Pasquotank River will be held May 28-30 in Elizabeth City. "Anything That Can Float But A Boat" race. Showboat Players. competitive walks and runs. parade. fireworks. and entertainment by The Platters. the Sheiks of Shag. The Waller Family. Captain Cook and the Coconutz. Contact: Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce. P.O. Box 426. Elizabeth City. N.C. 27907-0426. Phone: (919) 335-4365.

RiverSpreee last year attracted 70,000 people.

Doug Van de Zande



Exhibitors include Joel Haas. who mae "Flamingos? Where?" (top) and Jim Gallucci. who made "Immigrant Gate."

Garden sculpture

June 19-Oct. 2. Greensboro Arboretum.

"Critical Mass–Art in the Arboretum." a garden sculpture exhibit by North Carolina. South Carolina and Virginia artists. Open house on June 19. The arboretum is open from sunrise to sunset. Contact: Kathy Gabel. P.O. Box 3136. Greensboro. N.C. 27402-3136. Phone: (919) 373-2558.

WWII airfield reunion

Oct. 1-3.

Reunion for military and civilian personnel who served at the Kingman Army Airfield between 1942 and 1948. Contact Kingman Army Air Field Remions. Inc., 6000 Flightline Dr., Box 3. Kingman. Ariz. 86401. Phone: (602) 757-1892.

Conetoe homecoming

May 28-30. Conetoe.

Homecoming for 103rd birthday of Conetoe United Methodist Church. Barbecue chicken. arts. crafts. bake shop. entertainment. games. Sunday fellowship and luncheon. Contact: Doris Bennett. P.O. Box 128. Conetoe. N.C. 27819. Phone: (919) 823-7872.

Exhibits at Statesville

Through June 13. The Arts & Science Center.

"War Between The States Prints & Displays" and the "Coca-Cola Collection." Also the fifth annual Heritage Saturday. June 5. Contact: The Arts & Science Center. 1335 Museum Rd.. Statesville. N.C. 28677. Phone: (704) 873-4734.

Coastal Wildlife Expo

June 5-6. Morehead City.

Decoy carvers. wildlife art. antique working decoys. educational displays. competitions. auction. Down East seafood. Benefit for Core Sound Waterfowl Museum. Contact: Karen Amspacher. P.O. Box 356. Harkers Island. N.C. 28531. Phone: (919) 728-4644.

Scottish fair

May 22. Franklin.

Groundbreaking for Scottish Tartans Museum. Pipe band parade. dignitaries. food. books. crafts and music. Contact: Betty Merrill. Franklin Town Hall. 70 W. Main St.. Franklin. N.C. 28734. Phone: (704) 524-4498.

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Say co-ops "should be strengthened"

Co-op leaders oppose plan to cut REA subsidy

Rural electric cooperative leaders exchanged letters with the White House and Congress in February after President Clinton proposed eliminating an interest subsidy on loans the government makes to co-ops.

Bob Bergland, general manager of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), said in a letter to all members of Congress that the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), "instead of being considered part of a deficit reduction package ... should be strengthened."

REA is the U.S. Department of Agriculture agency that lends money to rural electric cooperatives. Currently, co-ops pay 5 percent interest on those loans. Clinton's proposal, which he mentioned in his state of the union address, said they would pay the same rate the Treasury pays for long-term money it borrows. That rate is now around 7.3 percent.

Rural residents often pay more for their electricity than city dwellers because there are fewer people to absorb the costs in rural areas.

Carl Whillock, chief executive of the Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corp., and a long-time Clinton supporter, wrote to his old friend pointing out that co-ops receive a smaller subsidy than other kinds of electric utilities.

"With lower government assistance and a much lower rate of consumers-per-mile, we serve the heartland of America," Whillock wrote. "The cost to serve our consumers is substantially higher simply because we remain true to the commitment of serving everyone, even in the sparsely settled areas, rather than just the more populated areas of the country."

Under Clinton's plan, REA would continue to lend money to electric co-ops, but would no longer subsidize the interest rate, except in a few cases. A small pool of $25 million would be loaned at 5 percent to "hardship" borrowers, until 1998.

"Rural communities are ever changing and their utilities must be kept up, or the communities will die."

The government estimates it will save $374 million over four years by eliminating the subsidy.

"REA was created in 1935, when only 11 percent of farms in the U.S. had electric service," says Clinton's written proposal, called, "A Vision of Change for America." "Now nearly 100 percent of rural areas have this service."

But Bergland, in his letter to Congress, countered, "Who would suggest that federal airport or highway improvements should be ended simply because the facilities are in place?"

The plan does not address the high cost of maintaining electric equipment in rural areas, or the co-ops' role in rural economic development.

"Some also argue that rural electrification is now complete and that REA can be ended," Bergland added. "In fact, rural communities are ever changing and their utilities must be kept up, or the communities will die."

Ironically, elsewhere in Clinton's plan, the president recognizes that "rural areas were among those hardest hit by the recent recession." The proposal offers ways to provide "needed assistance for the special concerns of rural areas."

Among them are rural water and sewer loans and grants. Water quality, the plan says, is a "matter of increasing concern."

Some rural areas are unable to pay the high cost to comply with federal water standards. The administration proposes to offer $470 million more in loans and $281 million in grants for the Rural Development Administration to help poor rural communities comply with clean water standards.

—Rural Electric News Service

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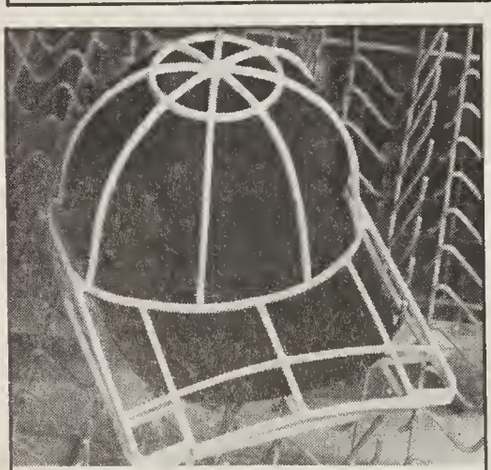

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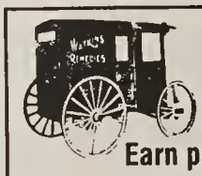

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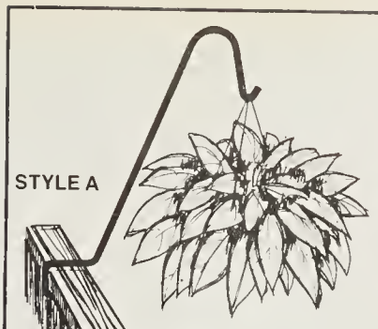

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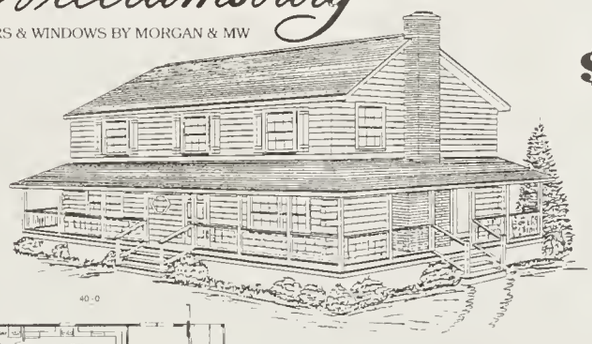

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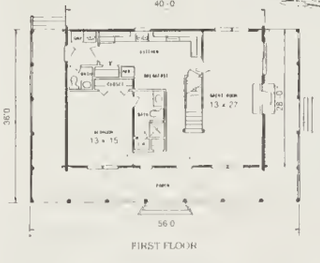

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Carolina Electric Cooperatives Annual Meeting

Co-ops face stiffer competition

Electric cooperatives face tightening budgets as the cost of energy rises and government policies change.

In such a climate, the competition is stiffening among electric utilities to attract new consumers, upgrade service and boost the regional economy.

These messages coursed through the 43rd annual meeting of Carolina Electric Cooperatives in Raleigh March 10-11.

About 400 people attended, including locally-elected directors and employees of North Carolina's 28 electric cooperatives.

Lt. Gov. Dennis Wicker at the podium. Seated, from left, are Hugh Batts of Jones-Onslow EMC, Rouzie Hunt of Lumbee River EMC and Marvin Marshall of South River EMC.

The meeting, long considered a forum for elected officials to address community leaders, this year hosted Attorney General Mike Easley, Lt. Governor Dennis A. Wicker, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Bob R. Etheridge.

Wayne D. Keller, executive vice president of Carolina Electric Cooperatives, told co-op officials of the work under way at the state office for exploring power supply options, improving communications, and maintaining positive relationships with business allies and government.

The cooperatives "are reaching the biggest crossroads we have ever seen," said Bob L. McDuffie, executive vice president and general manager of Randolph EMC, Asheboro, and North Carolina's representative on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

He said aside from potential changes in REA policies, the Electric Membership Corporations (EMCs) must deal with the controversy over electromagnetic fields, political favoritism for natural gas producers and proposed energy-taxes.

David Batten, general manager of Brunswick EMC, Shallotte, offered an optimistic report as the co-ops' representative to the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative, which provides satellite TV programming services to co-ops. He said recent cable TV reform legislation favors rural TV services, and that new technology will make the 18-inch "direct broadcast satellite" receiver available to co-ops.

Annual elections

New presidents take charge of two of the three organizations which comprise Carolina Electric Cooperatives as a result of annual elections.

McDuffie, was elected president of North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation, the co-ops' power and transmission organization. Gary A. Whitener, manager of Rutherford EMC, Forest City, was elected vice president of NCEMC, and Lloyd H. Lee, manager of Tideland EMC, was re-elected secretary-treasurer.

Morrell Jones Jr. of Enfield, a director of Halifax EMC, was elected president of the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives, the co-ops' trade association. Charles R. Tolley, manager of French Broad EMC, Marshall, was elected vice president, and Alice E. Wilson of Tarboro, a director of Edgecombe-Martin County EMC, Tarboro, was elected secretary-treasurer.

Martha McKnight of Sparta, a director of Blue Ridge EMC, Lenoir, was re-elected president of the

Tarheel Electric Membership Association (TEMA), the co-ops' central purchasing and material supply organization. Hugh L. Batts of Hampstead, a director of Jones-Onslow EMC, Jacksonville, was re-elected vice president, and Roy Stamey of Canton, president of the board at Haywood EMC, Waynesville, was elected secretary-treasurer.

Re-elected to the 9-member TEMA board for 3-year terms were McKnight, Batts and Leslie J. Bell of Mt. Olive, a director of Tri-County EMC, Dudley.

The statewide Rural Electric Action Program, a political action organization, re-elected chairman R.B. Sloan Jr., executive vice president of Crescent EMC, Statesville. R.W. Blanchard Jr. of Turkey, a director of Four County EMC, Burgaw, was elected vice chairman. James Lee Burney, manager of government relations for Carolina Electric Cooperatives, was re-elected secretary-treasurer.

College scholarships

Carolina Electric Cooperatives Women's Advisory Committee awarded college scholarships to two high school seniors who last year joined the Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington.

Kris Ward

Rhonda Gail Hines of Wallace received the $1,000 Gwyn B. Price Memorial Scholarship. Kathy Alicia Wood of Spring Lake received the $500 Katie Bunch Memorial Scholarship. Kris Ward of Clarkton received Carolina Electric Cooperatives $1,000 Youth Consulting Board Scholarship.

Hines and Ward represented Four County EMC, Burgaw, while Wood represented South River EMC, Dunn.

The awards were announced during Carolina Electric Cooperatives Annual Meeting.

Scholarship winners Kathy Wood of Spring Lake and Rhonda Hines of Wallace.

Awards given for service to co-ops

Managers service awards

Six managers of North Carolina's electric cooperatives were honored for their years of service at the annual meeting of Carolina Electric Cooperatives.

Topping the list was J. Kelly Hutchens, who retired in 1992 after 45 years of service to Surry-Yadkin EMC.

Also honored were Marvin O. Marshall, South River EMC, 30 years; Edward E. Brown Jr., Four County EMC, 25 years, and for 15 years each, Douglas W. Johnson, Blue Ridge EMC; Myron D. Rummel, Cape Hatteras EMC; and James B. Kinghorn Jr., Edgecombe-Martin County EMC.

Directors service awards

Carolina Electric Cooperatives honored 32 directors of electric co-ops during the organization's 1993 annual meeting. The local officials were saluted for their years of service to rural electrification. They are as follows:

Blue Ridge EMC, Lenoir: James E. McNeil of Route 1, Ferguson, 15 years. Bill E. Brown of Route 1, Boone; John Woodruff of Sparta, 25 years.

Cape Hatteras EMC, Buxton: Fred J. Neuman of Buxton, 15 years.

Carteret-Craven EMC, Morehead City: Roy E. McCable of Route 1, Havelock, 20 years.

Davidson EMC, Lexington: B. Glenn Smith of Lexington, 15 years. Eston S. Stokes of Route 2, Linwood, 40 years.

Four County EMC, Burgaw: R.W. Blanchard Jr. of Route 1, Turkey, 25 years.

Harkers Island EMC, Harkers Island: James T. Gillikin of Harkers Island, 20 years.

Jones-Onslow EMC, Jacksonville: Fletcher Barber of Trenton, Horace Phillips of Route 1, Trenton, 20 years. Hugh L. Batts of Hampstead, Clifton D. Taylor of Route 5, Kinston, 25 years.

Lumbee River EMC, Red Springs: Timothy Strickland of Route 3, Maxton, 15 years.

Pee Dee EMC, Wadesboro: Richard H. Johnson of Route 4, Wadesboro, H.M. Royals of Wadesboro, 20 years.

Piedmont EMC, Hillsborough: C. Franklin Murphy of Route 3, Mebane, Marvin L. Poythress of Chapel Hill, Richard C. Roberts of Hillsborough, 20 years. Alvin H. Hawkins of Route 1, Hurdle Mills, 25 years.

Pitt & Greene EMC, Farmville: Lloyd Gay of Route 1, Fountain, 30 years.

Roanoke EMC, Rich Square: E. Carlton Garner of Route 2, Roanoke Rapids, 15 years. Henry A. Bennett of Route 1, Rich Square, 30 years.

Rutherford EMC, Forest City: Paul G. Dalton of Route 1, Lake Lure. John T. Wyant of Route 1, Vale, 25 years.

South River EMC, Dunn: Francis Clifton of Route 1, Faison, 20 years. Ralph Johnson of Route 1, Roseboro, 35 years.

Surry-Yadkin EMC, Dobson: Bobby S. Adams of Route 1, Elkin. Garland M. Chilton of Mount Airy, 15 years. J. Olen Centry of Route 1, Roaring River, 30 years.

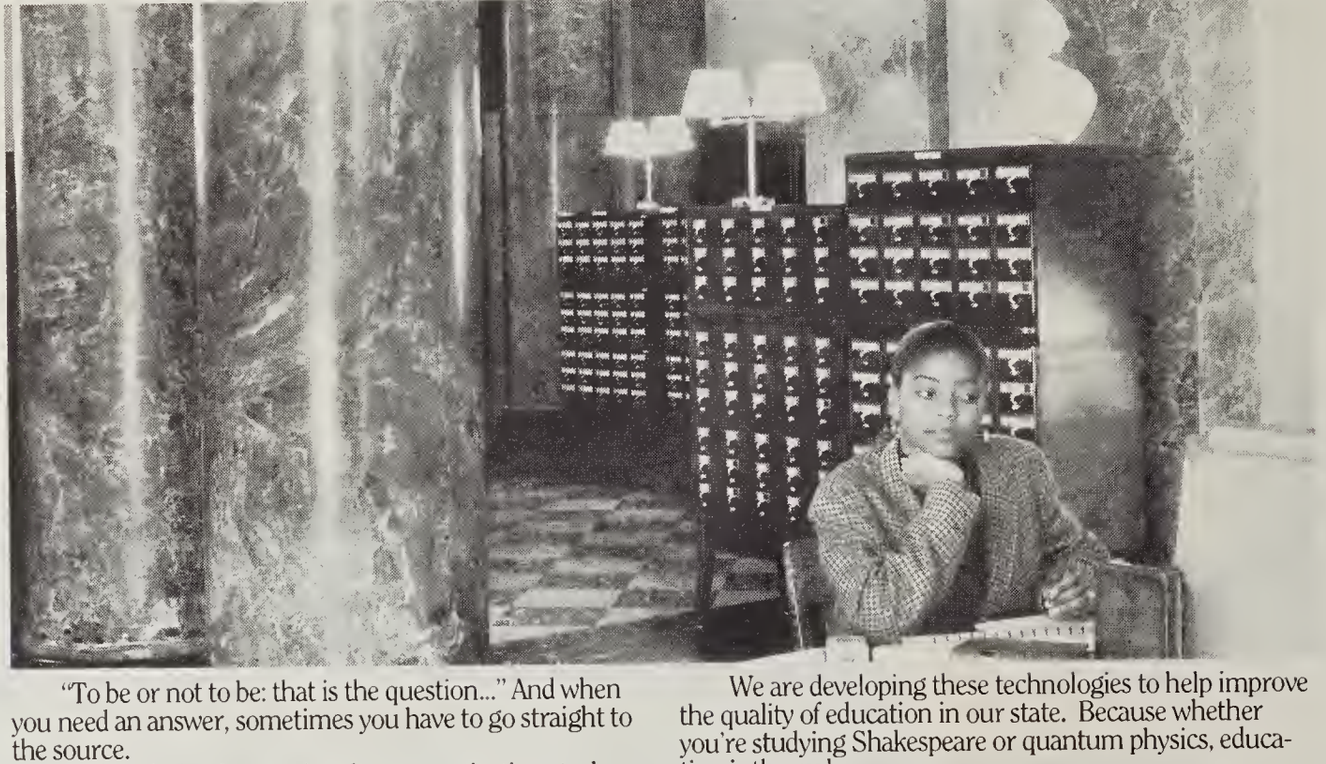
Tri-County EMC, Dudley: Leslie J. Bell of Route 2, Mount Olive, 30 years.

Union EMC, Monroe: William R. Wilson of Route 1, Richfield, 25 years.

Special employee service award

The office manager at French Broad EMC, Marshall, was singled out for special honors during the annual meeting. Florence M. Ramsey, believed to be the first employee of a North Carolina electric co-op to complete 50 consecutive years of service, was cited for having reached that milestone with French Broad EMC on Dec. 18, 1992. During the award ceremony, French Broad EMC Manager Charles Tolley called her "one of a kind."

To Finish Her Term Paper, She Called Up William Shakespeare.



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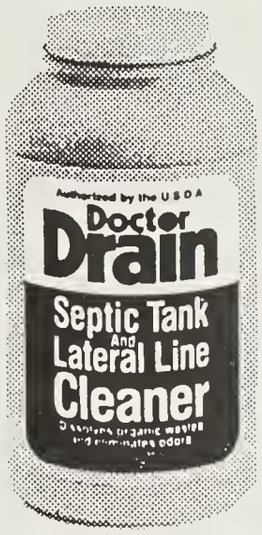

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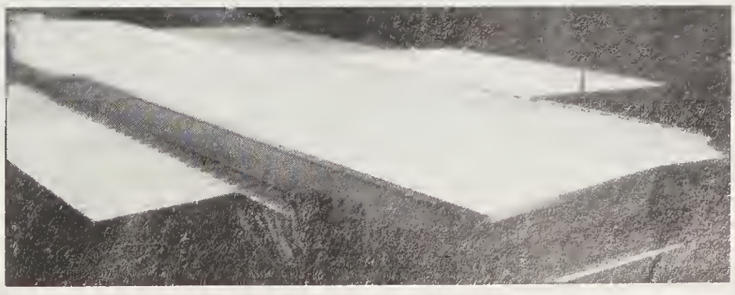

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Hank's Gardening Guide

by Hank Smith

As the spring-to-summer transition moves into full swing, gardeners must be alert for the best planting opportunities.

In the garden, you can almost see the spring-to-summer transition from day to day. Many shrubs are showing new shoots of growth; some growth is beginning to harden off. In another few weeks some of the new growth will be just right for semi-hardwood cuttings.

At this season we sometimes experience periods when it's too wet, then too dry, then too wet—forcing gardeners to be on the alert for best planting opportunities.

Insects are becoming active. Diseases can spread rapidly. Now's the time to check them with recommended sprays and dusts before tender growth is damaged.

The only reason to delay in planting vegetable and flower seeds outdoors: soil and night temperatures must be warm enough before seed go in the ground.

Fruits and nuts

Spray and fertilize fruit and nut trees as needed now that they are setting next year's crop. Be particularly careful to control the pecan nut casebearet with sevin or malathion.

Check strawberries as they begin producing fruit. Keep on the alert to control insects and diseases which could rapidly ruin the crop.

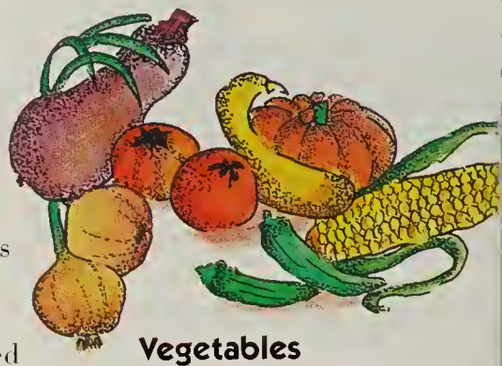
New trees and shrubs

Spring-planned deciduous trees and shrubs, including fruit trees, need additional top pruning if new shoots appear weak and 'floppy' or plants show no signs of new growth.

Tip prune each branch a few inches, retaining the natural form of the plant. This equalizes root-top balance. The only exception to such pruning is shrubs growing in a severely stylized or "modern" style. These are pruned into unnatural shapes that are seldom appropriate for the average home landscape.

Balled-and-burlapped plants that had the root ball broken or loosened at planting require top pruning. Sometimes roots of these plants were severed in digging, and branches need pruning to make up for the root loss. Plants retaining many fibrous roots always require less pruning than those reduced to a few whip-like roots.

Wait at least a year after planting before pruning to shape a tree. In this type pruning, remove only enough of the top to promote healthy growth. The more leaves that are produced the first year or two after planting, the faster new roots and top growth will develop.



Vegetables

Now that the soil has warmed up, sow seeds of field peas, bush and pole beans, okra, squash and corn. If you have ample space, plant pumpkins now.

Transplants of eggplant, onion, sweet potato, tomato, and pepper should be put in the garden now.

Visit for ideas

One of the best ways to make decisions regarding plant choices for landscaping your home is to see live specimens.

Take the family to visit public gardens and nurseries where you will have a chance to compare trees, shrubs and other plants. In older gardens you will find mature specimens—alerting you to the amount of space you need set aside for certain shrubs and trees.

If you are a newcomer to the area, such a visit will guide you in learning what is suitable and adapted to your new home's yard.

Young plants, particularly seedlings, that are set out during the summer should be shaded for a few days after planting.

Camellia transplanted late in the season or moved into direct sunlight from a lathe house should be shaded through the first summer.

Rooting aucuba

Gold dust (aucuba) is one of our most popular shade tolerant shrubs. The handsome glossy leaves with splatters of yellow make a distinctive landscape accent. One species bears solid green leaves.

Aucuba is easily rooted in mix of one-half potting soil and one-half clean sand. Cut tings also root easily in wate

If you desire plants which bear red berries, cuttings must be made from shoots that bear the berries. Those without berries are not capable of producing berries.

Spring into summer

1. Work a bit of lime around lilac bushes and clematis vines. They prefer alkaline soil.

2. Move houseplants outside for summer. They will dry out quickly in summer heat—so be sure to provide sufficient water.

3. Keep newly set-out plants well watered.

4. Plant seed of all annual flowers, planning flower beds so blooms will 'show.' Use a stair-step plan with the tallest-growing on the back (or in center), lowest-growing in front (or at base), and intermediates in the center.

5. Replenish mulch around shrubs and flower beds. This helps to conserve moisture, control weeds and "dress up" beds.

6. Fertilize winter-color shrubs now. Among these: nandina, pyracantha (firethorn), and the holly group (evergreen and deciduous).

7. German or bearded iris may be moved or replanted any time after they complete their blooming period, up until the first of October.

8. The best time for hand-weeding is just after a good rain when soil is wet and you can pull weeds right down to their roots.

9. Root tomato suckers in peat moss and sand mix. When roots are well formed, move plants to the vegetable bed.

10. When watering all plants don't just sprinkle; water deeply. Shallow watering encourages shallow roots.

11. Poor air circulation contributes to spreading mildew. Set plants with enough space for air circulation. This is especially important with roses, dahlias, zinnias, lilacs, sunflowers, phlox and crepe myrtles.

12. Water vegetable garden twice a week if there is no rainfall. Use a soaker hose to make best use of water and to help cut down on spread of diseases that thrive on moist leaves.

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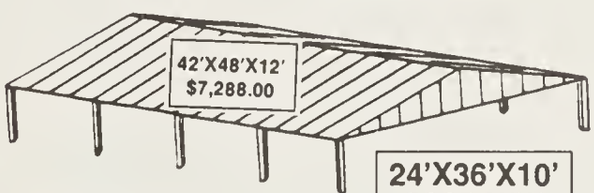

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Journal

by Owen Bishop

Readers choose their favorite apples, and an Anson County man's invention proves effective in keeping snakes and squirrels out of birdhouses.

Favorite apples: a three-way tie

The McIntosh, the Stayman and the York drew votes for "favorite apple" from readers who wrote to us in response to our February column comparing today's commercial apples with those your grandmother might have used.

The piece gave a thumbs-down sign for most supermarket apples, based on reviews by Lee Calhoun of Chatham County, who has spent the past 10 years researching and growing old varieties of Southern apples.

He says most consumers are accustomed to commercial varieties that are "not the best quality in flavor and texture" in comparison with older types of apples.

His favorite among the commercial apples is the Stayman.

That variety also inspired a thumbs-up response from Colleen Apple of Denton. (Yes, that is her real name!)

Mrs. Apple, a member of Randolph EMC, Asheboro, said the column and a related feature on Calhoun's research "really brought back memories" of her childhood.

"My mother and father moved from Davidson County over into Randolph when I was about three years old.

"I remember the wonderful apple trees on that place. They not only gave us wonderful fruit but also gave us good places to climb and play.

"I don't have any idea which varieties of apples we had but I know we had Jem apples and what must have been the old Stayman. This was a very large tree and it had large, juicy, tart apples on it. ...

"The Stayman has always been my favorite apple but, like Mr. Calhoun, I don't think the newer variety is as good as the old one. I have been able to get some of the better ones at Fancy Gap, Va., and I will drive all the way up there to get them."

Audrey Bollero of Route 12, Statesville, a member of Crescent EMC, prefers the McIntosh.

"I grew up in New Jersery, where it was common," she wrote. "When I moved south 15 years ago, I couldn't find it in stores. Now, though, it is available from time to time. It's crunchy, juicy and sweet-tart.

The York is "No. 1" for Jean Mabe of Route 1, Danbury, who also recommended a recipe for canning them.

Mrs. Mabe, a member of Surry-Yadkin EMC, Dobson, said the Yorks are "not real round, but they are the best to eat and for canning. They stay firm when cooked and are a beautiful yellow color. They are sweet and take only a little sugar."

The recipe, which she's used for years,"came from a friend and she got it from her grandmother. It really works well," she said.

Canned Apples

Peel, core and slice apples—6 or 8 slices per apple. Drop in water, with a little salt or lemon juice added, while peeling several. Drain or remove from water. Put in large container and add ½ cup of suger for each quart of apples. Mix sugar through apples and let set about 6 or 8 hours. This brings the liquid out. Cook on low or medium-low to heat. Then turn heat to medium until they boil and become fork tender. Pack in sterilized jars and seal.

Simple device protects bluebirds from predators

Reese Pope of Anson County shows off some of the predator guards he invented to protect birdhouses from snakes and squirrels. (Photo by Bryant Braswell, Pee Dee EMC)

After our popular series on bluebirds appeared in 1991, many of our readers inquired about methods of protecting their bluebird houses from hungry snakes, who can easily make their way into unprotected houses.

Since then, we have managed to track down Reese Pope of Route 4, Wadesboro, who has developed a simple but effective device that will keep snakes and other animals out of the houses. It's a predator guard that's made of sheet metal formed into the shape of an umbrella.

He invented the guard to keep snakes and raccoons out of his duck houses, but members of the Anson County Bluebird Club quickly saw its potential for protecting bluebirds.

The county, which bills itself as the "Bluebird Kingdom of the World," claims a strong contingent of bluebird fanciers, including Heyward McKinney, a former manager of Pee Dee Electric Membership Corporation, Wadesboro, who authored our two-part series.

McKinney and other members of the club thought they could entice more people to put up bluebird houses by offering them some of Pope's predator guards. The club commissioned Pope to make about 20 of the guards.

Pope, who billed the club only for the cost of his materials, said, "There's no point in having a bluebird house without a guard."

He said the device is easy to make for anyone who has worked with sheetmetal. And any metal shop can make the guards.

Are they foolpoof?

"Well," he said, "nothing's impossible. But I've never seen a snake that could outsmart it!"

If you're interested in more information about these predator guards, write or call Pope at Route 4, Box 404-A, Wadesboro, N.C. 28170.

1993 EMC Annual Meetings Calendar

DATE	EMC	TIME	LOCATION
May			
15	Halifax, Enfield	Registration: 9:00 a.m. Business Meeting: 11:00 a.m.	Enfield Middle School, Enfield
June			
12	Blue Ridge, Lenoir	Registration: 8:00 a.m. Business Meeting: 9:30 a.m.	Ashe Central High School, Jefferson
18	Randolph, Asheboro	Registration 6:00 p.m. Business Meeting: 8:00 p.m.	Southwest Randolph Middle School, 5 mi. SW of Asheboro

Recipe Correction

The recipe for "orange coconut cake" which appeared in the April issue of *Carolina Country* erroneously stated that cake made from two boxes of cake mix should be "cut into four layers." The two boxes of cake mix actually yield four cake layers. *Carolina Country* apologizes for making the error.

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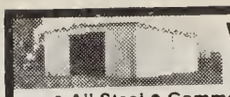

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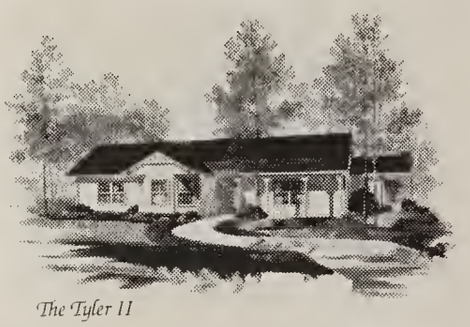

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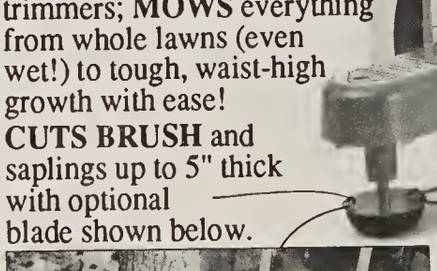

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